Better, perhaps, if it was not averted; better, perhaps, blackout than grey-out.

Hopes entertained that Stalin would come forward as civilisation's resolute defender, take Mr. Speaker, Black Rod, Provost and Fellows, Dean and Chapter all under his wing, were sorely disappointed. He left civilisation to look after itself, preferring to send the Red Army against Polish troops in flight rather than against German troops advancing. Two forces, bound to come together, because the same, came together now, disconcerting their admirers—even Lord Rothermere wondering if Hitler really was a very great gentleman; even the Dean of Canterbury-wondering if the Sermon on the Mount really did lead via class war to the Soviet regime. With the possibility of Russian participation in the Peace Front removed, there was no need to delay a German attack on Poland; and, when this took place, a British declaration of war on Germany was inevitable.

Now old uniforms were brought out, put away long ago; old songs were remembered, thought to have been forgotten; old ways were resumed, old emotions experienced, old hopes revived. No new war was possible, so an old one would have to suffice. Out of the past, a ghost was summoned up, intervening years cancelled; out of the past, a corpse was disinterred, made to stand upright and seem alive, all that had happened since its interment, abolished—like two lovers meeting, after many years parted, picking up the thread of their old intimacy—here we dined, here we sat, here we embraced, and now again dining, again sitting, again embracing; only faces grown

haggard, eyes grown tired, passion all spent.

IV

Many had envisaged the horrors of another war, dwelt on the destruction and suffering and slaughter it would involve. What happened, none had envisaged—all the circumstances of war existing, but no war; a war which would not happen, and yet which was; a war with manifestations of passion, but passionless;